

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1782

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8683

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT DAILY MR 3 SITREP - 16 MAY 1973

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON DTD 16 MAY FROM BIEN HOA

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L BIEN HOA 0128

1. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN MR 3 CONTINUED AT A VERY LOW LEVEL DURING THE 24- HOUR PERIOD ENDING 0800 HOURS 16 MAY. THERE WERE 14 VC/ NAVA- INITIATED INCIDENTS REPORTED CONSISTING OF 4 ATTACKS BY FIRE (ABF), 6 GROUND CONTACTS AND 4 MINE INCIDENTS. TOTAL CASUALTIES FOR THE PERIOD WERE 17 FRINEDLY WOUNDED, N O FREIENDLY OR VC/ NVA WERE REPORTED KILLED DURING THE PERIOD. TON LE CHAM RANGER BASE CAMP, TAY NINH PROVINCE RECEIVED 41 ROUNDS OF MIXED 61 MM AND 82 MM MORTAR FIRE. NO CASUALTIES OR DAMAGE WERE REPORTE. THE VC/ NVA WERE AGAIN REPORTED USING LOUDSPEAKERS TO ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE RANGERS TO SURRENDER THE CAMP, AND TO STOP FIRING ARILLERY INTO " LIBERATED AREAS". MINES WOUNDED 13 OF THE 17 REPORTED WOUNDED ON THE GVN SIDE DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD. IN LONG KHANH, LONG AN AND BINH LONG PROVINCES A TOTAL OF 12 RF/ PF WERE WOUNDED WHEN THEY DETONATED MINES WHILE CONDUCTING SECURITY OPERATIONS. IN TAY NINH PROVINCE A FARMER WAS WOUNDED WHEN HE DETONATED A MINE WHILE WORKING IN HIS FIELD. MINOR ATTACKS BY FIRE AND LIGHT
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GROUND CONTACTS WERE REPORTED IN BINH DUONG, HAU NGHIA, BIEN HOA AND TAY NINH PROVINCES.

2. POLOFF HAU NGHIA REPORTS: IF IT IS TRUE THAT MORALE IN SOME RF/ PF UNITS IS STILL GOOD, IT MAY BE PARTLY DUE TO THE BELIEF THAT THE U. S. WILL AGAIN BAIL SOUTH VIET- NAM OUT IF THE GOING GETS ROUGH. AN RF BATTALION COMMANDER IN TRANG BANG SAYS THAT 90 PERCENT OF HI SOLDIERS ARE CERTAIN THAT IF THE COMMUNISTS LAUNCH ANOTHER MASSIVE ATTACK AND SAIGON IS BADLY PRESSED, THE U. S. WILL BE FORCED TO SEND ITS ARMY BACK TO VIET- NAM

3. THE CU CHI DISTRICT CHIEF REPORTS THAT ON MARCH 16 THERE WAS A BATTLE BETWEEN VC AND NVA FORCES IN BAO TRE HAMLET, TAN AN HOI VILLAGE. THE DISTRICT CHIEF WAS UNABLE TO EXPLAIN WHY THE COMMUNISTS WERE FIGHTING, OR WHAT CASUALTIES THEY SUSTAINED.

4. SHADOW SUPPLY, I. E. VC/ NVA PURCHASE OF ITEMS NEEDED TO SUPPORT THEIR TROOPS FROM MARKETS AND CITIZENS NOMINALLY UNDER GVN CONTROL, IS A MAJOR PROBLEM ALONG THE BORDER BETWEEN CAMBODIA AND VIET- NAM IN MR 3. GVN CORRUPTION AND THE GREED AND SHORT- SIGHTEDNESS OF A FEW PRIVATE CITIZENS HAVE ALLOWED THE COMMUNIST TROOPS OPERATING IN HAU NGHIA AND TAY NINH TO RESUPPLY WITH EASE. EVERYTHING HAS A PRICE INCLUDING ARTILLERY SHELLS AND GASOLINE, BOTH OF WHICH ARE NOMINALLY BEING RATIONED ON THE GVN SIDE.

5. AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER IN AHU NGHIA ESTIMATES THAT THE COMMUNISTS CAN INFILTRATE MORE THAN 100 OF HAU NGHIA' S 137 HAMLETS IN SMALL GROUPS AT NIGHT. THE VC ARE NOW CONCENTRATING ON SPREADING PROPAGANDA, DIGGING TUNNELS, AND TAXING RATHER THAN SEEKING OUT ARMED ENGAGEMENTS.

6. POLOFFS IN TAY NINH AND HAU NGHIA AGREE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIET- NAM IS TRYING TO TIGHTEN ITS CONTROL OF SOUTH VIET- NAM BY ASSURING THAT SYMPATHETIC CANDIDATES ARE ELECTED TO VILLAGE COUNCILS. RESULTS FROM THE FIRST ROUND OF ELECTIONS IN TAY NINH PROVINCE 13 MAY SEEM TO CONFIRM THIS IMPRESSION. OF 66 VILLAGE COUNCIL POSITIONS TO BE CONTESTED, THERE WERE AT LEAST 60 VICTORIES FOR THE DEMOCRACY PARTY. WHITEHOUSE
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